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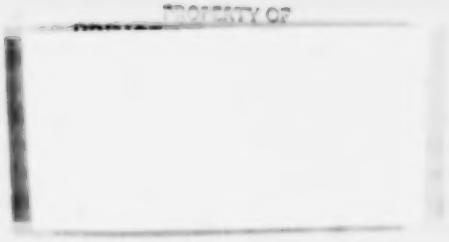

UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1994-1995 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1996

PART II. ASIA AND OCEANIA

Section 4 - Hong Kong

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.95-02489

II.4 HONG KONG

1. Beneficiary population

1. In 1994, 107 Vietnamese arrived before 14 February 1994, the cut-off date set by the Fifth Steering Committee meeting for new arrivals to fall under the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees (CPA). The Steering Committee took the view that arrivals after that date should be dealt with according to national legislation and internationally accepted principles. Of the 453 persons who had arrived in Hong Kong since that date and as of mid-July 1995, no case has as yet been determined to qualify for refugee status. The total Vietnamese population at 31 December 1994 stood at 24,310; virtually all of them were determined not to be refugees and therefore have to return to Viet Nam. There are still 1,700 Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong.

2. Asylum-seekers who have been determined not to be refugees are accommodated in a number of detention centres located in the Hong Kong urban area and outlying islands. The Vietnamese refugee population is accommodated in Pillar Point camp, an open refugee centre where refugees are permitted full freedom of movement and also enjoy the right to employment. Refugees in Hong Kong came from both rural and urban backgrounds with the majority having only primary education. Approximately 59 per cent are male; 28 per cent are children below the age of 16.

3. In 1994, 21 non-Indo-Chinese asylum-seekers arrived in Hong Kong. Two of them were determined to be refugees.

2. Developments in 1994 and 1995

4. During 1994, 5,581 Vietnamese repatriated voluntarily to Viet Nam under UNHCR auspices on 38 charter and commercial flights. Of this total, 80 per cent returned to the north and the rest to the south and central areas of Viet Nam. This figure includes 62 unaccompanied minors who returned under the Family Reunion Programme.

5. Despite intensive counselling and an extensive information campaign, significantly fewer persons than in 1993 volunteered to return to Viet Nam under the UNHCR sponsored voluntary repatriation programme. The number of persons returned under the Orderly Return Programme (ORP) of the Hong Kong Government, 250, also represented a decline. UNHCR actively explored ways to promote voluntary repatriation. As an incentive to voluntary repatriation, the Hong Kong Government introduced an allowance of $150 to each returnee.

6. During 1994, 1,504 Vietnamese refugees were resettled in Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland the United Kingdom and the United States, or settled locally in Hong Kong.

7. Within the framework of the CPA, the Hong Kong Government completed the refugee status determination in December 1994, both the first instance with the Hong Kong Immigration Department and appeal by the Refugee Status Review Board. UNHCR 's mandate review was completed on 28 February 1995.

8. Simplified repatriation procedures, which are due to become operational by mid-1995, should lead to increased repatriation. A monthly target of 1,800 returnees is foreseen until the completion of CPA activities (targeted for early 1996 in Hong Kong). The new procedures will be accompanied by personalized counselling of the Vietnamese who are cleared for return. Coupled with the continuing information programme, it is hoped that the large majority of Vietnamese will choose to return under UNHCR auspices.

9. Following the technical meeting on Resettlement and Repatriation of the Steering Committee (Bangkok, June 1994), which set the end of 1994 as the target date for acceptances for resettlement of all remaining eligible refugees, UNHCR stepped up its resettlement efforts which resulted in 940 refugees being accepted for resettlement. The issues of refugees with drug addiction problems and those with criminal records were addressed. In cooperation with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and WHO, a detoxification programme was launched with assistance from a medical consultant.

3. 1996 country programmes

(a) Objectives

10. Initial planning for UNHCR's 1996 Hong Kong programme proceeded along the line of the recommendations of the Sixth Steering Committee meeting on 16 March 1995. With simplified repatriation procedures, it is expected that as from mid-1995 the monthly return will be 1,800 Vietnamese, including those who will return under the government-conducted Orderly Return Programme. The promotion and implementation of repatriation under UNHCR auspices will continue into 1996.

11. All required steps to meet the target dates are being taken. This means completing resettlement of refugees, preparing appropriate durable solutions for the refugees who will not resettle, and the stepping-up of repatriation of those persons determined not to be refugees. Specific problems, such as that of Vietnamese illegal immigrants from China and persons claiming to have a nationality of a third country or regarded as non-nationals by Viet Nam will also be addressed.

12. In 1996, UNHCR will strengthen its role in monitoring the legislation and practice with respect to the determination of refugee status of non-Vietnamese and Vietnamese arriving in Hong Kong outside the CPA. A reduced level of legal staff will be maintained primarily to attend to protection issues and residual CPA eligibility issues.

(b) Proposed Budget for 1996

(i) General Programmes

13. Care and maintenance assistance in the form of individual/family support will be provided to refugees/asylum-seekers residing in Hong Kong. The initial budget has been established in the anticipation that durable solutions for Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong will have been identified and that the caseload will decrease. However, UNHCR will closely monitor developments and modify the programme if necessary.

(ii) Special Programmes

14. In accordance with the targets set by the Sixth Steering Committee meeting in March 1995, it had been expected that most activities would diminish, but field operations and logistical support for repatriation movements would remain in place for the remaining cases pending for repatriation. The initial budget for Hong Kong was only to cover these activities for a limited period in 1996. In view of the latest legislative developments in the major resettlement country affecting the CPA, UNHCR will closely monitor developments in the region and in Hong Kong and may have to modify its programme and adjust the budgetary requirements to reflect actual needs.

(c) Implementing partners

15. The Hong Kong Government provides the land, infrastructure and management costs in the detention centres, while UNHCR funds the cost of care and maintenance and related services. In Pillar Point Refugee camp, UNHCR funds health care, education, social services, counselling, security and management costs, as well as food allowances for unemployed refugees and detoxification for drug addicts, in close cooperation with voluntary agencies.

16. The Agency for Volunteer Service provides manpower resources, primarily in the areas of repatriation, resettlement, education and social services. Other agencies are St. Stephen's Society, CARITAS, International Social Services, Christian Action (CA) and Médecins sans Frontières. UNHCR in the past years has not been able to raise sufficient funds for the care and maintenance programme in Hong Kong. As of the end of 1993, the Hong Kong Government has therefore borne from its own funds an estimated $ 126 million, for which it is asking to be reimbursed.

(d) Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

17. Variations due to changes in budget parameters are not discussed in the subsequent analysis (Overview of UNHCR Activities, Part I (A/AC.96/845) refers).

(i) 1994 expenditure (all sources of funds)

18. The 1994 expenditure was lower than revised estimates mainly due to lower than expected expenditure for common staff costs. Expenditure for procurement of non-expendable property, such as handset radio equipment and fire fighting equipment to cope with demonstrations in the camps, was slightly higher than expected.

(ii) Revised 1995 requirements (all sources of funds)

19. The revised 1995 requirements are higher than initial estimates mainly due to extension of one international Field Officer post, which proved necessary due to the still high number of Vietnamese in Hong Kong.

(iii) Initial 1996 requirements (all sources of funds)

20. The 1996 requirements are lower than the 1995 revised requirements mainly due to the expected gradual scaling down of the operation in Hong Kong. During 1996, it is envisaged that a minimum number of protection staff will be maintained to attend only to UNHCR's statutory protection-related responsibilities. Appropriate staffing levels will be maintained to provide realistic support to care and maintenance, voluntary repatriation, resettlement and social services programmes, especially relating to protection problems in the camps.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN HONG KONG

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1994	1995		1996	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1994 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
1,393.6	1,425.9	2,244.5	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	51.8
0.5 a/	–	–	LOCAL SETTLEMENT	–
275.5 b/	199.5	71.3	RESETTLEMENT	–
1,242.5	945.7	1,425.6	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Overview Tables (Part II)	1,041.4
2,912.1	2,571.1	3,741.4	SUB–TOTAL OPERATIONS	1,093.2
271.0	319.8	367.0	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Overview Tables (Part II)	435.7
3,183.1	2,890.9	4,108.4	T O T A L (1)	1,528.9
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
2.0	–	–	OTHER TRUST FUNDS	–
13,161.7	16,778.9	20,865.1	COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION	–
718.0	558.4	671.7	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Overview Tables (Part II)	–
137.7	146.8	183.2	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Overview Tables (Part II)	–
14,019.4	17,484.1	21,720.0	T O T A L (2)	0.0
17,202.5	20,375.0	25,828.4	GRAND TOTAL (1+2)	1,528.9

a/ obligation incurred against Other Programmes
b/ of which US$ 489 incurred against Other Programmes